NCA
VOC FOR IOP/FN
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WAYNE CORY/BANGKOK

MALAYSIAN POLITICS

ANNCR:

THE VICTORY OF MALAYSIA'S RULING FRONT IN THE KELANTAN STATE ELECTION HAS SET THE STAGE FOR NATIONWIDE ELECTIONS LATER THIS YEAR. WITH A BACKGROUND REPORT ON THE NEW POLITICAL SITUATION IN MALAYSIA, HERE IS VOA CORRESPONDENT WAYNE COREY.

VOICE:

THE KELANTAN ELECTIONS PRODUCED AN OVERWHELMING VICTORY FOR UMNO -- THE UNITED MALAYS NATIONAL ORGANIZATION -- WHICH NOW CONTROLS ALL OF WEST MALAYSIA'S ELEVEN STATES. KELANTAN HAD BEEN THE STRONGHOLD OF THE CONSERVATIVE PAN-ISLAMIC PARTY -- THE BIG LOSER IN A SERIES OF EVENTS THAT ENDED WITH ITS ELECTION DEFEAT.

LATE LAST YEAR, THE STATE ASSEMBLY IN KELANTAN, THEN CONTROLLED BY THE ISLAMIC PARTY, WAS DISSOLVED AND FEDERAL RULE WAS DECLARED BECAUSE THE ISLAMIC PARTY, WAS DISSOLVED OF RIOTS THAT ACCOMPANIED A NO CONFIDENCE VOTE AGAINST AND THE DISMISSAL OF THE POPULAR CHIEF MINISTER DATO MOHAMED NASIR. DATO MOHAMED NASIR BROKE AWAY FROM THE ISLAMIC PARTY AFTER IT TURNED AGAINST HIM AND FORMED THE BERJASA PARTY, WHICH SUCCESSFULLY CAMPAIGNED WITH UMNO IN LAST WEEK'S STATE ELECTION.

FEDERAL RULE IN KELANTAN WAS LIFTED A FEW WEEK'S AGO AND DATO MOHAMED NASIR WAS INSTALLED AS CARETAKER CHIEF MINISTER. HE IMMEDIATELY CALLED FOR NEW ELECTION. NOW UNMO AND THE CHIEF MINISTER'S BERJASA PARTY CONTROL THIRTY FOUR OF THE THIRTY SIX MEMBERS OF THE STATE ASSEMBLY.

THE CREDIT FOR UNMO'S ELECTION VICTORY IN KELANTAN AND IT'S IMPROVED NATIONWIDE POSITION GOES TO MALAYSIA'S

FINANCE MINISTER TENGKU REZALEIGH HAMZAH WHO IS ALSO THE UMNO LEADER IN KELANTAN. REPORTS FROM KUALA LUMPUR SAY HE WILL PLAY AN INCREASINGLY INFLUENTIAL ROLE IN DECIDING UMNO'S CAMPAIGN STRATEGY FOR NATIONWIDE ELECTIONS LATER THIS YEAR.

THE KELANTAN ELECTION AND THE GOVERNMENT'S HANDLING OF THE DETENTION OF FORMER SELANGOR STATE CHIEF MINISTER DATO HARUN IDRIS POINTS TO INCREASED POLITICAL STABILITY IN MALAYSIA. WHEN SUPPORTERS OF DATOHARUN, WHO WAS CONVICTED ON CHARGES OF CORRUPTION, SURROUNDED HIS HOME IN KUALA LUMPUR EARLIER THIS MONTH THE CITY BECAME TENSE. IT WAS THOUGHT THAT THERE WOULD BE VIOLENCE THAT MIGHT ERUPT IN NEW RACIAL CLASHES BETWEEN MALAYSIA'S ETHNIC CHINESE AND MALAYS. AS IT TURNED OUT THE GOVERNMENT, USING CLEVER PSYCHOLOGICAL PLOYS DIFFUSED THE SITUATION WITHOUT BLOODSHED. DATO HARUN SUBMITTED HIMSELF TO THE AUTHORITIES AND LIFE IN THE MALAYSIAN CAPITAL QUICKLY RETURNED TO NORMAL.

JS/PY